



The Laffite Society Chronicles

VOLUME I NUMBER 1
JANUARY, 1995
[2ND PRINTING 7/99]

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| A NEW LOOK AT AN OLD LEGEND | R. Dale Olson |
| THE "GROS LAFFITE" | |
| LAFFITE SOCIETY LOGO | |
| BURRILL FRANKS: A LAFFITE MAN | Jean Epperson |
| GENERAL MEETING PROGRAM ABSTRACTS | |
| FOURTH GREAT GRAND DAUGHTER OF ARSENE LEBLEU | Patricia Keel |
| DESCENDANT OF JANE LONG AND JAMES CAMPBELL | Randal Matthews |
| THE NEUTRAL ZONE | Don Marler |
| LAFFITE LITERATURE REVIEW | Jim Nonus |
| FACIAL IMAGES OF JEAN LAFFITE | R. Dale Olson Diane Olson |
| CURRENT NEWS | |
| FOREIGN SOURCES OF RESEARCH | Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic |
| RESEARCH DIRECTIONS | |
| SPECIAL EVENTS | |
| WELCOME NEW LAFFITIANS | |
| THANK YOU FROM THE SOCIETY | |
| CALENDAR | |

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| President | R. Dale Olson |
| First Vice President | Jim Nonus |
| Second Vice President | Randy Pace |
| Third Vice President | Diane Olson |
| Secretary | Dorothy McDonald Karilanovic |
| Treasurer | James B. Earthman |
| Archivist | Kurt D. Voss |
| Parliamentarian | Lou MacBeth |
| Coordinator of Research | Bill Foley |
| Historian | Bernadette Foley |

The Laffite Society is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the study of the Laffites, and the geographical locales and chronologic era associated with them.

ANNUAL DUES ARE:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Student | \$15.00 |
| Senior (Over 65) | 15.00 |
| Institution | 15.00 |
| Individual | 30.00 |
| Family | 35.00 |
| Sustaining Member | 100.00 |
| Life Membership (One Payment) | 350.00 |



The Laffite Society Chronicles

A NEW LOOK AT AN OLD LEGEND...

R. DALE OLSON

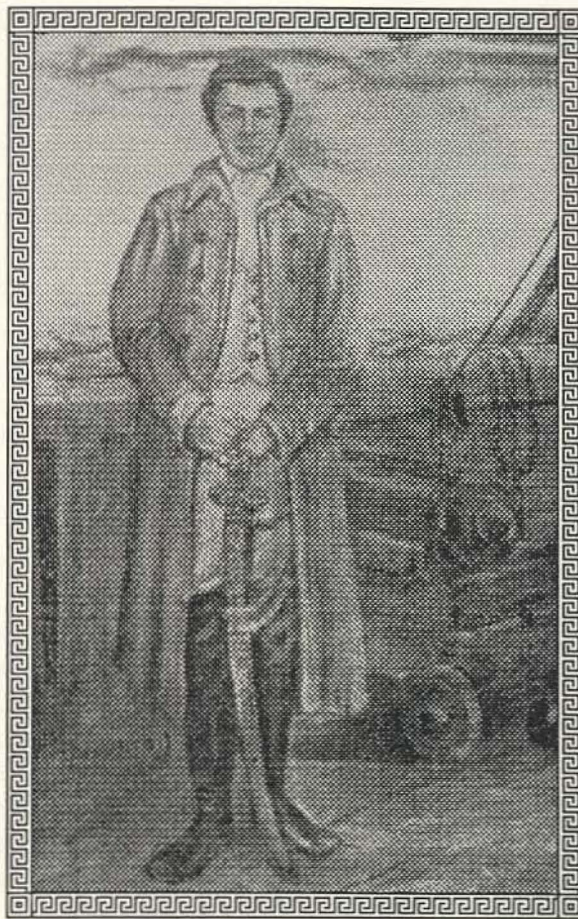
The motivation for the formation of The Laffite Society was not singular. Several acquaintances, aware of my long interest in the history of Galveston Island, had expressed their interest in learning more of Jean Laffite, and their opinions that a formal organization would best serve the goal of education. Second, the recent inactivity and possible dormancy of an earlier organization, the Laffite Study Group, was also noted. Finally, casual conversations with others here on the Island and in Louisiana suggested the desirability of exploring the formation of a

Continued

This representation of Jean Laffite, allegedly by the French artist, Baron Antoine Jean Gros, bears the date 1804, a time at which Laffite would have been approximately 24 years of age. Gros was born in Paris, 1771 and died at Bas-Meudon in 1835.

Characterized as having held an important position in the development of the romantic movement in France, his works often reflected a coloristic bravura with dramatically crowded composition.

As with other pictorial likeness of Laffite, the work by Gros carries a clouded provenance.



JEAN LAFFITE
1804

new organization dedicated to the study of the Laffites, their related geographical locales and chronological era.

These elements coalesced during the Spring of 1994 and led to a series of informal meetings beginning in the month of May. The new Laffite Society was established and began formal monthly General Meetings on August 8. The Society holds a General Meeting on the second Monday of each month at the Rosenberg Library on Galveston Island at 7:00 p.m.

A Board of Directors has been chosen, the quality and depth of which will assure long term continuity. The primary goal of the Laffite Society is education and proliferation of information concerning the Laffites and their historical times. Toward that end, several projects have already begun to take form.

- An "Inventory of Documents" has been organized and, though only now in the stages of being catalogued, will soon number well over 500 articles, documents, and books related to Laffite.
- A list of individuals interested in Laffite has been collected and a membership directory is expected to be available late in 1995.
- A survey of research interests of members is being conducted so as to provide all members with the identities of others with whom they may share information.

- Proposals for approximately three special events, or field trips per year, has been presented. These events will include sites in both Texas and Louisiana associated with the Laffites.
- This, the first edition of *The Laffite Society Chronicles*, represents the achievement of the most important project of The Society.

Although established in Galveston, the Society is not simply a group of connoisseurs and history buffs with a focus on Galveston Island. The Board encourages the active participation of members from various geographic locales. Toward this end, at least one field trip is tentatively planned for the State of Louisiana during 1995. Members whose location does not encourage attendance at monthly meetings may join us at special events. Others may participate by contributing to the *Chronicles*, or simply by advising us of their study interests.

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Founding Board of Directors who have employed their abilities, expertise, and time to bring this organization to this first very important stage. We now set about to continue our monthly meetings, set special events, publish the *Chronicles*, and permit the process of maturation to occur.

I welcome all of you as members of the Laffite Society.

THE LAFFITE SOCIETY LOGO

A reproduction of the Jean Laffite signature originally affixed to the "Le Brave" documents was chosen as part of the logo of the Laffite Society. This signature is generally considered to be authentic in that it has been in the custody of the United States government since originally signed by Jean Laffite in Federal Court in New Orleans. Its originality and provenance is therefore assured. The Society employs the spelling of Laffite with two "f's" and one "t".



BURRILL FRANKS: A LAFFITE MAN

JEAN L. EPPERSON

Burrill I. Franks was over six feet tall, remarkably expert with shooting a rifle, and one of Jean Laffite's (the corsair), men (1). He was basically a hunter who helped augment the Galveston commune's larder with meat and supplies. A few of Laffite's men stayed or returned to Texas after Laffite sailed away, among those was Franks who got a land grant on Bolivar and remained in the Galveston area the rest of his life.

Burrill was the son of Andrew Franks and his wife Celia McKenzie. Andrew, a North Carolinian of German ancestry, had served in the Revolutionary War as a drummer in the North Carolina Continental Line. Burrill was born in North Carolina in 1789 and moved with the family to the Cape Girardeau District, now Missouri, by 1798. The Franks were in Louisiana by 1810 living on a tract of land in the neutral strip on Bayou Piedra twenty-one miles from Natchitoches (2).

September 1, 1814 in Quachita Parish Louisiana, Burrill Franks married Mary Irvin (3). Moving to St. Landry Parish he applied for a land grant and received 640 acres of land on the west bank of Calcasieu Lake at a place called Hackberry Island. William V. Smith swore before the board of land commissioners in Natchitoches that the Franks had occupied the land and grew vegetables there prior to February 22, 1819. He further stated that the Franks' improvements embraced about one quarter of an acre, and that the family lived there continuously from 1819 until the present, ie; 1824. The land was granted to Franks as a third class claim (4). During this same period Burrill testified for many of his neighbors on the west bank of the Calcasieu so that they could also claim land. The neighbors included, Elias Blunt, James Barnett, Rees Perkins, Jacob E. Self, Hardy Coward, George Smith and George Orr. Several of these men settled in Texas in the Liberty area.

Hackberry Island is not an island but a relatively high ridge of land bordered on the east by Calcasieu lake and on the west by marsh to Sabine Lake. Here Burrill undoubtedly met and joined the adventurers and marine marauders moving down the coast into Spanish Texas.

Reminiscing in 1883, Mark Franks said they joined Governor Louis Aury and went to Texas in 1817, landing at Galveston Island. Aury was supplanted by Jean Laffite as the commander of Galveston and the Franks remained until Laffite was expelled in 1821. Mary claimed that she bore the first white child on the Island and kept a boarding house near Laffite's storehouse. The child would have been William, their second son. The family returned to Louisiana in 1821, stated Mary, but came back to Texas in 1828 (5).

The 1820 census of St. Landry Parish, Louisiana lists the Burrill Franks family as living in the Parish and having one male over 45 years, one male 26 to 45, one male 18 to 26 and two males under 10. There was only one female listed, she was 16 to 26 years of age. Three persons in the household were engaged in agriculture. Members of the family probably moved back and forth between Louisiana and Galveston during their sojourn on the Island, so Mary's statement about returning to Louisiana in 1821 was probably not inconsistent with the facts.

Burrill made a statement before the land commissioners of Liberty County that he had emigrated to Texas with his family in 1826 (6). He probably was reluctant to admit that he had been with Laffite, although it was generally known at the time.

George Orr, the Alcalde (Mayor) at Atascosito (Liberty, Texas) wrote to Stephen F. Austin on May 23, 1827 saying that he and Henry Munson had examined Burrill Franks, who lived on the Neches River near the lower crossing, about thefts from

Continued

Atascosito. This must have been the first home site of the Franks family after they moved back to Texas. Franks told Orr and Munson that the thieves were two men named Hawkins and Clement. Hawkins had been at Franks house and he learned that they had a herd of stolen horses on the Trinity River, above the San Antonio crossing (7).

A visitor in Texas in the spring of 1831 reported seeing Franks. He wrote, "The famous pirate Laffite, as is well known, made his rendezvous in Galveston Bay. Two of his men I found at Anahuac. They were named Roach and Franks. Franks is above six feet high, and remarkably expert in shooting a rifle. A man who knew him well did not hesitate to hold a board for him to shoot at from a considerable distance" (8). Franks was undoubtedly living on Bolivar Peninsula at this time and visiting the new military settlement at Anahuac.

Shipwrecked on the coast of Texas in 1831, David L. Kokernot describes the house and children of Burrill Franks on Bolivar Peninsula. "In short time I saw a small house to the southwest, which was Bolivar Point, I then left the beach and took a straight course for the house, going through the salt marsh, which was quite muddy. Covered with mud, I reached the house and found three small children, the oldest being twelve years. There were two boys and one little girl seven or eight years old. They were the children of Burrell Franks, the great hunter" (9). The children said that their parents had gone up the Trinity River to get supplies. They gave Kokernot food and water and the little girl gave him a mixture of goldenrod boiled in milk and sweetened which cured him of a fever. The oldest boy was Elijah and his brother was William. Kokernot does not name the girl except to say that she later married a Bloodworth (10). This episode must have taken place in the fall of the year, as that is when the goldenrod is in bloom, and not in the spring as Kokernot reported.

The 1834 Census of the Anahuac Precinct in the Atascosito District listed the Franks family as: Burrell Franks, 45 years, a farmer, his wife Mary, 37, his son Elijah, 19, his son William, 16, their daughter, 13, their son, 8, and their daughter, 3. The last three children were not named (11). The three oldest

children certainly appeared younger to Kokernot than they really were.

In 1838 Burrill applied for a land grant for citizens who had been living in Texas on March 2, 1836, and before. His witnesses were Martin Dunman and Hugh B. Johnson, and his request was approved. He received one league and a labor of land which he located partially on Bolivar Peninsula where he had been living. Elijah, as a single man received 1/3 of a league of land, and located it at Roll-Over Pass on Bolivar Peninsula (12).

During the deposition for Burrill's grant Martin Dunman said that Burrill left Point Bolivar in April 1836 leaving about nine head of cattle and twenty hogs in his care until he, Burrill, could return. Dunman was at Burrill's house in Louisiana in February 1837 and Burrill and his wife were very sick and had just buried a daughter. Burrill stated that he would move back to Texas as soon as he was able (13).

Gail Borden, Jr. reported in September of 1837 that Elijah Franks had presented himself at the Galveston Custom House in his vessel, the sloop Reindeer. The sloop was laden with sundry cargo from the wreck of the Schooner Mary. This vessel was stranded some thirty-two miles east of Point Bolivar (14).

Galveston District Court Records (Vol. A) for May 9, 1839 recorded that Elijah and Burrill Franks and Frederick Devore were indicted for grand larceny by the Republic of Texas. Martin Dunman their friend and neighbor put up a \$10,000 bond to guarantee their appearance in court. It has not been discovered why the charges were made, but a strange entry in the District Court Minutes of November 27, 1839 (vol. 2, pg. 131) reveals that the States Attorney dropped all charges against Elijah Franks, "it being suggested that the defendant is dead". One wonders who made the suggestion as Elijah Franks was listed for the next three years in the tax rolls of Galveston county and was living with his mother in the 1850 Census of Lavaca County, Texas. The charges against Burrill Franks and others were dismissed on March 1, 1840 (15).

The 1840 tax records of Galveston County list Burrill Franks as living in the county and being taxed

Continued

for 4,605 acres of land, 75 head of cattle and one wooden clock. Elijah was also in residence and was taxed for 147 acres. By 1841 Burrill had only 2,310 acres, two saddle horses and a four wheel pleasure carriage. Elijah increased his land holdings to 1,180 acres and had 25 cattle, and a carriage. William Franks is listed this year on the tax roll for the first time. He owned five cattle. In 1842 Burrill had 35 head of cattle and a pleasure carriage. Elijah and William had each ten head of cattle and William had a silver watch. The 1843 tax roll is the last roll in which the Franks family is listed in Galveston county. Burrill had 2,337 acres of land and 57 head of cattle. Elijah paid only \$1.00 poll tax and owned no property and William had 11 cattle and the silver watch.

Burrill and his wife sold 1,922 acres of land on Bolivar to Martin Dunman in February, 1846. They signed the deeds with their marks as they were not literate (16). Elijah Franks was living in Limestone county in 1846 as was the William J. Bloodworth family. Elijah's oldest sister, Emalin, was married to Bloodworth (17).

The next trace of the Franks family is in the 1850 Census of Lavaca County. Burrill is no longer listed with the family which consists of Mary Franks, age 52, born in Virginia, Elijah, 33, born in Texas, and Mary E., 11, born in Texas. The son William was not found.

Many years later several law suits were filed to reclaim the Louisiana land that Burrill had (18). In November of 1942 an heir, O. L. Stocks of Arizona, claimed that Burrill Franks died about the year 1857. It is more likely that he died between 1846 and 1850 when the family moved to Lavaca County. The outcome of the law suits is not known.

Mary Franks lived with her daughter, Mary E., and her son-in-law, Louis Bully, in Atascosa County during the 1860 U.S. Census. She was 62 years of age and listed as a midwife. Mary was living on Matagorda Island in 1883 where she had been for fifteen years. Her obituary in The Galveston Daily News of August 1, 1885 said that she died in Alvin, Texas on July 30 in her 88th year.

Burrill Franks and his family are significant as they

typify the early pioneer coastal families who emigrated to Texas and endured many hardships, but stayed.

NOTES

1. Anonymous. A Visit to Texas in 1831. (Houston: Corvodon Press, 1975), 82. Burrill's name was sometimes spelled Burrel or Burrell. He was apparently illiterate and signed his name with an X.
2. Jean L. Epperson, "183 Census - Anahuac Precinct, Atascosito District", Southwestern Historical Quarterly, January, 1989: 437-447; Fail Felts Davis, German Carolinians in the Lineage of Emmett Rendol Felts (Shreveport: Moore Printing Co., 1982), 32, 59-61: American State Papers IV, 132.
3. Ouachita Parish, Louisiana Marriage Records, Book C, p. 147.
4. American State Papers IV, 73, Duff Green Ed., Claim #269 to Burrell Franks of St. Landry Parish.
5. The Galveston Daily News, December 11, 1883.
6. Liberty County Board of Land Commissioners' Minutes, 1838-1841, #241.
7. Eugene C. Barker, The Austin Papers II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924-1928), Part 2, p. 1643.
8. Anonymous, A Visit to Texas in 1831, 82.
9. The Gonzales Weekly Inquirer, June 22, 1878.
10. Ibid.
11. Jean L. Epperson, "1834 Census Anahuac Precinct", 443.
12. Liberty County Board of Land Commissioners' Minutes.
13. Ibid.
14. Gail Borden Jr. to A. Broghan, September 15, 1837, "Galveston Customs House 1835-1844", microfilm, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas.
15. Charles W. Hayes, Galveston I (Austin: Jenkins Garrett Press, 1974), 418.
16. Galveston County Deed Records, Book F, pages 94 & 95.
17. The Republic of Texas Poll List for 1846.
18. Gail Felts Davis, German Carolinians, 59-63.

PROGRAM ABSTRACTS

Abstracts of General Meeting Programs are usually prepared by the featured speaker and often contain information which may be in conflict with contrasting views or established documentation. The material contained in this section does not, therefore, necessarily reflect the view of The Laffite Society. The Laffite Society does, however, encourage discourse regarding conflicting views.

MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 1994

FOURTH GREAT GRAND DAUGHTER OF ARSENE LeBLEU

PATRICIA KEEL

Patricia Bennett Keel recounted the various legends which associated Louisiana pioneer Arsene LeBleu with Jean Laffite.

"Arsene LeBleu was the first white man born in the Calcasieu area. He was among the largest land and slave holders in southwest Louisiana. The old home was a spacious cypress house, covered with plaster, and plastered inside with attractive murals on the smooth walls. Hospitality was the order of the day in those times, supplies and servants were plentiful, and visitors were royally entertained.

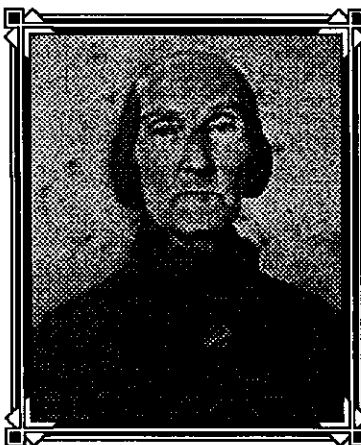
Arsene, whom Laffite called 'my captain', always welcomed Laffite and his men into the LeBleu home on English Bayou because Laffite was considered a war hero rather than an outlaw because of his help in defending New Orleans during the Battle of New Orleans. Laffite made his headquarters with LeBleu, spending many delightful days at his home and forming a lasting friendship with the family.

LeBleu built a small log cabin for Jean Laffite where the privateer would often come to rest, feeling safe in his own home with his captains keeping watch nearby. It was rumored that Jean hid some of his gold here.

Part of my merchandise was unloaded at the mouth of the Calcasieu, in the care of Mr. Arsene LeBleu',

Laffite wrote. In addition, Arsene LeBleu provided a 'double-pen' log house, a 20 foot by 20 foot structure for storage of Laffite's silks, spices, teas, liquor, jewels, and other contraband. This building stood the wear and tear of many years, but was finally destroyed by the hurricane of August, 1918.

Laffite was at all times generous to a fault to those he loved. Once, in return for a gift of fresh meat and tanned deer hides, Laffite presented Arsene LeBleu with two of his most faithful slaves, Creastauck (a Cuban) and Jean (a gigantic Zulu). These slaves were valued at eighteen hundred dollars each on the market at that time. The descendants of old Creastauck may still be found in the community of Lake Charles today.



ARSENE LeBLEU

Once, when Arsene LeBleu admired a handsome diamond stud Laffite was wearing in his silk shirt, Laffite unscrewed the fabulous gem and tossed it to Lebleu, remarking that he'd better keep it as it was

Continued

much too beautiful for a rough privateer.

Charles Sallier, was a political exile until Laffite brought him to settle in Lake Charles. Sallier was thought to be a minor monarch who'd been exiled from France or a French Province. Jean Laffite helped him to escape and to settle in Louisiana. Sallier was in Opelousas, Louisiana in 1797, and then came westward until he reached the Arsene LeBleu home, east of Lake Charles.

There, Sallier met Arsene LeBleu's sister, Catherine. Charles Sallier fell in love with the tall, blonde, beautiful Catherine and married her in 1805. He built her a cabin on the southeast shore of the lake, which was then called Charles' Lake. Later, the little village that sprang up around this lake was called Charlestown, and finally it became Lake Charles. Only two pioneer families, the LeBleus and Salliers were in southwest Calcasieu Parish when Catherine LeBleu and Charles Sallier married.

During the years of 1815 to 1821, when Jean Laffite was headquartered in Galveston, he spent many hours slipping up through the Calcasieu River and Contraband Bayou into Lake Charles. Here he visited his friends, Charles and Catherine Sallier often, docking directly in front of the shell mounds before the house. Their children were loved by Laffite. One day, Jean Laffite told their little girl, Sydalise, 'See this bag of gold? If you can pick it up, you can have it'. Needless to say, the weight of the bag was too much for the child, but she remembered it and told the tale often to her own grandchildren. Sydalise used to listen from their lakefront home to songs sung by the pirates on their ship. 'They accompanied themselves on little accordions', she told her grandchildren, 'and I got in trouble when I sang the songs and my mother heard the words!'

On one occasion, Laffite told Catherine that she worked too hard and he emphasized his remarks with

an oath. She chided him for swearing in her presence and he gallantly replied, 'Pardon, madame, le Bon Dieu knows I can never atone for so grave an infraction of your hospitality. I can, however, ease my conscience and lighten your burdens'. With these amends he presented her with two fine Negro boys who served her until their respective deaths and whose descendants still live.



CHARLES SALLIER

One day Jean Laffite built a fort next to Sallier's cabin. He had captured a ship in the Gulf which was well stocked with treasure, and he was being chased by a federal gunboat. Hastily, Laffite sailed up the Calcasieu River and then slipped around into a little cut-off in Contraband Bayou, trying to hide from his pursuer. He didn't see the gunboat for a while, so he went on through contraband and into the lake, where he dropped anchor in front of Sallier's cabin.

Quickly, his men unloaded the treasure off Laffite's schooner and buried it on shore. Then, they brought their cannons ashore and bombarded their boat until it sank. Hastily, they constructed a fort from a huge shell mound left by Indians.

Either the federal boat could not find Laffite, or the crew was afraid to enter into the lake knowing the smugglers were on shore, but the gunboat was not seen again. After waiting all night and for several more days, with no news of the gunboat, Laffite finally bought another schooner, dug up his treasure and silently slipped back down the river to the Gulf of Mexico.

Circumstances are not clear, but somewhere along the line Charles became jealous of Laffite and accused Catherine of being too friendly with the privateer. One day, shortly after the birth of their sixth child, Charles, raging at Catherine, drew a pistol and shot her. She fell to the floor. Charles assumed she was dead and hastily exited the home.

Continued

He jumped on his horse and raced to the other side of the lake and disappeared. Charles Sallier was never heard from again.

But, Catherine Sallier did not die. She stood up and found the bullet that had hit her hand and then a broach that she was wearing. The broach kept the bullet from penetrating her body and saved her life.

Catherine lived on Shell Beach until she died at the age of 75. She never remarried, and most people believe that she was completely innocent of Charles' accusation.

In early August of 1994, my cousin, Dorothy Barbe, said that she has this amethyst brooch and verified that there are creases where the bullet struck it."

MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 1994

DESCENDANT OF JANE LONG AND JAMES CAMPBELL

RANDAL MATTHEWS

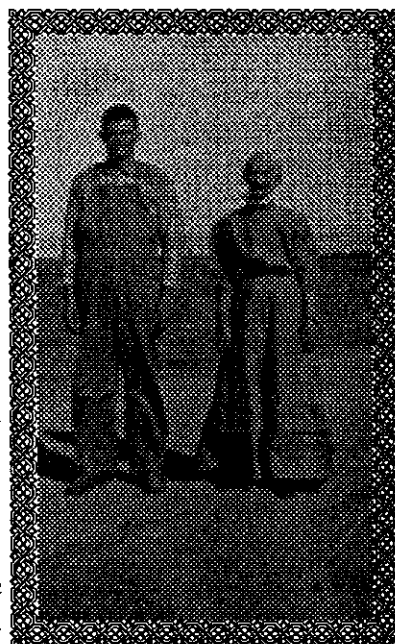
Member Randal Matthews, a third-great grandson of Jane Long, presented the Society with a synopsis of the history of his family. His descendants have lived on the Gulf Coast since the time Jean Laffite occupied Galveston Island.

Much information concerning Jane Long is available from other sources, such as the papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar. In contrast to such known references, Randal provided private anecdotes generally unknown to those outside the family. During Christmas of 1820, while her husband General Long was in Mexico, Jane and her children were starving on barren Bolivar Peninsula. Jane had attempted to catch fish to feed the children, but was unsuccessful. A fishing pole, left stuck in the sand, became exposed as the tide went out. A redfish had taken the bait and was found at the end of the line, providing the family with Christmas dinner.

According to legend, Mrs. Long was among the attendees at perhaps the final dinner given by Laffite prior to his departure from Galveston. Although it is documented that Laffite essentially denied a request from General Long for materials from Campeachy following the dismantling of the commune, it is not generally known that the privateer sent a large quantity of building materials to Jane Long on

Bolivar. According to Long family tradition, Laffite sent several of his men to Bolivar to assist in the construction of a house for Jane.

Although not mentioned in references recounting that final dinner, family tradition holds that Jean presented Jane Long with a powder horn as a gift. This horn is now believed to be housed in the Sam Houston Museum in Huntsville.



The above information provided by Randal Matthews was accompanied by a photograph, circa 1900, showing Anne Herbert Long, Jane Long's daughter, and William P. Long, Anne's son. William is great grandfather to Randal Matthews. Randal is also related to Laffite's Lieutenant James Campbell.

MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 1994

THE NEUTRAL ZONE

DON MARLER

Don Marler presented results of his research regarding the "Neutral Zone", an area of land between Texas and Louisiana which became haven for numerous individuals seeking refuge from law enforcement agencies. Don's presentation is essentially in outline form, with selected comments.

1. Events from 1800 to 1820 creating opportunities for Laffite:

- A. 1800 - Beginning of Filibusters against Texas: Philip Nolan
- B. 1803 - Louisiana Purchase
- C. 1806 - Creation of the Neutral Zone
- D. 1807 - Aaron Burr activity
- E. 1808 - Law against importing more slaves
- F. 1810 - Beginning of Mexican Revolution against Spain
- G. 1812 - War of 1812 with Britain
- H. 1816 - Jose M. de Herrera, Mexican Representative to the U.S., and Louis d'Aury, established a government on Galveston Island with sworn allegiance to Mexico
- I. 1817 - The forces at Galveston led by d'Aury and Esposa y Mina began a filibuster against Spanish Texas leaving Galveston vacated
- J. Various filibusters
 - 1. Gutierrez - Magee, August, 1812
 - 2. Long, 1819-1821
- K. Influx of many farmers along the Red River, creating a demand for slaves. Land there was second in quality only to that of the Nile River.

2. Neutral Zone characters associated with Laffite. Neutral Zone - a brief history - the back door to the U.S.

- A. General James Wilkinson
 - 1. Often referred to as the "Finished Scoundrel", he was head of the U.S. Army and was stationed at

New Orleans and Natchitoches.

- 2. Laffite referenced him several times in the Journal, and counted him as a friend and advisor.
- 3. Wilkinson was a double agent with the Spanish, Agent Number 13.
- 4. Laffite and many of his men became double agents also for purposes of betraying the Spanish. Pierre was Agent Number 13-1 A, and Jean was Agent 13-2 R. (pg. 84, Journal).
- 5. Wilkinson betrayed Burr.
- 6. Wilkinson was a father figure to Philip Nolan and Zebulon M. Pike.

B. Aaron Burr

- 1. Burr contracted with Jean and Pierre Laffite to guard the Gulf coast.
- 2. Two of Laffite's men (Robert Johnson and Jean Desfarges) confessed to scuttling the ship (The Patriot) killing all passengers including Theodosia.

C. Ellis Peter Bean/Philip Nolan

- 1. Nolan was the first to lead a filibuster against Texas - Spain.
- 2. Bean, a member of Nolan's crew, was captured and taken to Mexico.
- 3. Bean was a prisoner for many years until the Mexican Revolution began in 1810. He became an officer for Spain and then joined the Mexicans.
- 4. Bean had knowledge of gun and powder making.
- 5. The Revolution continued and, as it fell into desperate circumstances, Bean was asked to go to the United States to seek aid in the cause against Spain.
- 6. Bean later came back to the Neutral Zone, built Ft. Teran (on

Continued

- the Neches River in Tyler County) and became a wealthy businessman and Indian agent for the Mexican government. He lived near Nacogdoches.
- D. James and Rezin Bowie
1. The Bowie Brothers were in charge of north trading area as far north as St. Louis (Journal).
 2. James Bowie went with Long on his filibuster.
 3. Rezin Bowie became a state representative in Louisiana; He was a better businessman than James.
- E. James Long/Biglow
1. Jean Laffite said Long was associated with Biglow - who robbed his ship at Natchez shortly before Long started his filibuster.
 2. Long later sent Biglow to Galveston to attempt to get Laffite to assist: his crew recognized him as the robber (Journal, page 107).
 3. Jean Laffite says he betrayed Long to the Spanish (Journal, page 109).
- F. James Groves
1. Groves fought at the Battle of New Orleans and may have met Laffite there. After the Battle, he opened a trading post at Walnut Hill in Southwestern Louisiana. He owned slaves and race horses, and may have been involved in trade with Laffite contraband, but evidence was not found.
- G. William Smith
1. Smith settled on the Calcasieu between 1819 and 1824 (Nardini, Louis R. My Historic Natchitoches, 1963, page 154). He was reported to have been associated with Laffite (Carruth, Thomas J., Tales of Old Louisiana, 1990).
- H. Raymond Daley, Latney Parrott, and John Ayres.
1. These three operated a slave trade in the Neutral Zone (North) connected with Laffite (Nardini, Louis, R., My Historic Natchitoches, 1963, page 134.) These men were sons in law of Edmund Quirk, an East Texan involved in battles with the Mexicans and the Fredonia Rebellion. They were reported to have been with Laffite before coming to this area (Two Centuries In East Texas, Crockett, page 72).
- I. Mr. Tulley and Mr. Gunlineau
1. "Laffite needed food for his private operations. Up the Sabine River the boats were pulled, poled or paddled by the slaves to be sold. From the Los Adais and Natchitoches area came wagon loads of food, smoked hams, kegs of salted bacon, cornmeal, kegs of molasses, wine, corn, whiskey, dried beans, peppers, tobacco, sweet potatoes, and gourds of honey, with spiced cake sent by hopeful wives to the pirates so that their husbands might make more profitable deals".
"Back on the same wagons came slaves, bolts of cloth, jewelry and perfume ... Everything was legal as far as bills of sale went. A certain honest merchant in New Orleans, with a good reputation and scruples, signed blank bills of sale, to be filled in by Tulley and Gunlineau" (No Man's Land, Nardini, page 84).
 2. Sabine 28. (A code advising of an illegal auction of slaves on the 28th. of the month on the Sabine River).
- J. Pierre Laffite
1. Pierre visited Natchitoches in 1825 and again in 1832 (Journal, Page 125-126).
 2. Pierre owned land near

Continued

Natchitoches, 11,400 acres (Journal, Page 126).

3. Pierre's family lived on the Sabine, but he became estranged from them and returned to New Orleans.

3. Miscellaneous

- A. Jean Laffite was reported to have visited "Shawnee Town", as rough a town as there was in the area. It was located near Los Adais. Arsene LeBlue accompanied Laffite there Nardini, Louis R. No Man's Land, 1961, Page 79).
- B. Jean reported he had business agents in Alexandria.
- C. Pierre's son, Cezar, lived with his mother on the Sabine.
- D. There are many Laffites in De Soto Parish, Louisiana (located North and West of Natchitoches). They think they are related (perhaps to Pierre).

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 1994

REVIEW OF LAFFITE LITERATURE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

JIM NONUS

Jim Nonus presented a wide range of material from his personal library relating to Jean Laffite and the Laffite era. Some of the books and articles presented represent rather accepted views of the Laffite era, while others are highly debatable as to their authenticity.

Even though some pieces of the collection may be controversial, they are valuable in that they comprise part of the legend surrounding Laffite. One of Jim's goals is to accumulate the largest amount of literature available regarding Laffite. The reprint of the Journal of Jean Laffite, by Dogwood Press, as one example, represents a work whose authenticity is the source of a great division between Laffite connoisseurs, but, nevertheless contains some material valuable in the study of the privateer. The irony of the Journal is that the essential premise that Laffite lived a long life after his departure from Galveston is in contrast to the near total paucity of documented information post 1821.

The other books in the collection of material appear to be rather evenly divided on their handling of information post 1821, reflecting their acceptance or rejection of the Journal.

Laffite of Louisiana, by Mary Devereaux, is a romance novel, but was written prior to publication of the

Journal. It placed Laffite in France as a contemporary of Napoleon Bonaparte, which is in contrast to information contained within the Journal which claims Port au Prince as Laffite's birthplace.

One must exercise caution and discrimination in acceptance of printed material relating to the study of Laffite. As one example, within the collection of books presented, Laffite's gravesite has been reported in three different locations, a Louisiana grave he shares with Napoleon Bonaparte and John Paul Jones, a grave in the Yucatan, and, one in Alton, Illinois!

Even though controversial sources are included, the focus of the collection is documented material. An original printing of The New York Herald, of 1817, includes correspondence from a Lieutenant with the Mina Expedition on Snake Island (Galveston) dated 1816. It reads:

"Extract of a letter from a Lieutenant, who was one of the Expedition that sailed from the Chesapeake last summer, under the command of General Mina, dated 'Serpent Island, Galveston Camp [sic], 25th. Dec. 1816'.

"This is the first chance I have had to write since I left Port-au-Prince. I am sorry to say a number of

Continued

brave officers have died of the yellow fever. Seven died from the regiment I belong to. We are on an island near the main, where I expect we shall remain during the winter months. This Island, only a few months past, was inhabited by wild beasts and serpents. After the capture of Carthagena, Orea [Aury], now governor of this place, made a settlement with about one hundred people of different nations and complexions. He carries on the business of privateering to a very large extent, and is considered not much of a gentleman, for he wants us to join him in preference to the cause we are engaged in, which we will not. I must confess I have had hard times since I left New-York, and nothing but the glorious cause embarked in keeps me alive. You well know what money I had when I left you, (which was but little) and I have the mortification to say I have not since received a cent, but live on hope and fair promises. Our general is a fine man and does all in his power to make us comfortable, and says he placed money in the hands of some of the people in the United States, who have since failed.

You no doubt have had very unfavorable impressions of the expedition, but entertain not the least doubt we shall succeed in our expedition. We calculate to have some hard fighting, but the doubloons will pay for all. As yet we have had no use for our weapons of death, except among ourselves, and I am sorry to see them employed in this way; but such is the fact, for not a week passes by that there are not one or two duels.

P.S. This Island is headquarters for the Mexican privateers and prizes — One was sent in a few days since with the small sum of \$200,000. I have not been able to finger any of the Doubloons as yet; expect to when we get to Mexico”.

It is known that a high ranking member of the Mina party acted as a spy for Spain, and the hypothesis has been set forth that the anonymous author of the above letter may have been that spy. The content of the letter would certainly give any interested party a description of the status of the Mina Expedition.

Another original newspaper in the collection, The Niles Register of December 27, 1817, was also displayed. This often referenced source presents

much information in the form of extracts of correspondences, the most interesting of which is from the Collector of Customs in New Orleans, Beverly Chew, dated August 1, 1817.

Several original issues of The Louisiana Historical Quarterly and Louisiana History, The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, were displayed. These contain articles by Jane de Grummond, Stanley Faye, and Charles Gayarre, relating to Laffite, Aury, Mina, and other individuals and issues related to Laffite.

Also provided was a list of antiquarian bookstores in New Orleans and Galveston where material on the Laffites and their era could be purchased. Specifically, books have recently been obtained at The Dauphine Bookstore (Steve Lacy), The Librarie, Faulkners in Pirate's Alley, in New Orleans, and Yesterday's Books (Louise Nichols) and the Galveston Bookshop (John Kemmerly) in Galveston.



TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER, 1994, TUESDAY, GENERAL MEETING

FACIAL IMAGES OF JEAN LAFFITE

R. DALE OLSON, DIANE OLSON

R Dale Olson and Diane Olson presented a paper on "Facial Images of Jean Laffite", representing one aspect of their continuing research. This investigation involved comparison of nine different alleged images of Laffite accomplished by computer and statistical analysis. By scanning the different images on a computer, and enlarging all to a given standard, 25 different points of reference on each face were created, such as the distance between the center-line of the eyes and the center-line of the mouth. Ratios were then developed which described the relationship between each set of measures. Thus, a series of ratios was developed for each image. These sets of ratios were compared statistically to ascertain the probability that any two were of the same individual.

The images were divided into three different groups, "early" (images by Jarvis, Fortier, and Gros), "late"

(taken from the Laffite Collection at the Sam Houston Regional Library at Liberty), and "artists concepts" (works of Van Everen and Sydam).

Preliminary findings suggest that the group of early images correlate significantly with each other, as does the group of late images. The early images do not, however, correlate significantly with the late. Although this research is not yet conclusive, the initial results suggest that the early images are of the same individual, and the late images are likewise of the same person, but that the early and late images are of a different individual.

The researchers acknowledge with appreciation the assistance of the Olson Photo Associates of Anaheim, California, Mr. Ken Olson, President, and Mr. Richard Cordero, Computer Specialist, whose expertise and technical facilities greatly facilitated completion of this work.

FOREIGN SOURCES OF RESEARCH

DOROTHY McDONALD KARILANOVIC

MEXICO CITY

In August, 1994, The Society wrote to the General Archive of Mexico in Mexico City to obtain a copy of a map of Galveston Bay, drawn in 1817 by the famous architect-privateer Barthelemy Lafon. The Society received a reply to this inquiry in November from the General Director, Patricia Galeana, of the Mexican National Archives. The letter stated that an unsigned map of Galveston Bay does indeed exist in their archive, dated 1810. A small photostatic copy of the map was included with the letter.

Members of The Society were invited to visit the Archive in Mexico City to personally verify the year and research the authorship of the map. The General Director extended offers of assistance with research through the Reference Center (Centro de Referencias) of their institution. For further information, contact: Patricia Galeana, General Director, Archivo General de la Nacion, Eduardo Molina, esq. Albaniles, Direccion General, Numero de Oficio: 2574/95, MEXICO.

LE PECQ, FRANCE

In November, 1994, member Don Marler of Dogwood Press received a request for a copy of the Journal of Jean Laffite: The Privateer Patriot's Own Story from an historical association based in Le Pecq,

France. (Le Pecq is about 11 miles west of the heart of Paris). In exchange, the French group offered to send a copy of one of their monthly bulletins including an article on "le corsair" Jean Laffite. Their inquiry included information on how to subscribe to their monthly publication (\$34.00 per year).

The Le Pecq group belongs to the French Federation of Genealogy and, according to their letter, maintains a relationship with a "majority of other genealogical associations". They describe themselves as a group established in 1901, consisting now of about 300 members - persons and organizations - with an interest in the history of the Antilles and the established families who lived there - the islands of Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique, St. Martin, Marie-Galante, St. Barthelemy, La Desirade, the ancient French possessions such as St. Christophe (St. Kitts), St. Dominique (Haiti) or St. Lucie. Their prospectus includes an extensive list of articles, titles of research theses, various organizations with similar interests on the islands "bathed by the Caribbean". Readers are encouraged to write in questions of an historical nature and to furnish historical information for their bulletins. (For further information, write to: Genealogie et Histoire de la Caraibe, Pavillon, 23-12, av. Charles-de-Gaulle, 78230 LE PECQ, FRANCE.

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Jean Epperson | Burrill Franks (Refer to article this issue) |
| Andy Hall | Naval and maritime vessels |
| Lou MacBeth | Maison Rouge |
| Don Marler | The Neutral Zone of Texas. Possible alias of John Paul Jones. Possible blood relationship between Jean Laffite's first wife and Aaron Burr. |
| Jim Nonus | Comparative analysis of Laffite signatures. |
| Dale Olson | Maison Rouge |
| Diane Olson | Barthelemy Lafon |
| Keith Poster | Analysis of the political climate and relationship between privateers and statesmen in the power struggle for acquisition and control of Gulf Coast territories. |

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT THEIR SPECIAL AREAS OF INTEREST FOR PUBLICATION IN THIS COLUMN.

SPECIAL EVENTS

4 FEBRUARY 1995, SATURDAY.

The Society will visit the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty, Texas to view the controversial Laffite Collection and hear a presentation by Robert Schaadt, Director. While there, the group will be given a tour of the replication of the Texas Governor's Mansion on the grounds of the Library. After the tour, the group will adjourn to Liberty for lunch.

19-21 MAY 1995, FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY.

A three day trip to Grand Isle and New Orleans is currently being planned. Tentatively, the group will meet at Grand Isle and be given a tour of Grande Terre and of the old houses and cemeteries on Grand Isle. From there, the Society will travel to New Orleans and visit several locations associated with the Laffites. This will be an opportunity for the Galveston contingent to meet with members from Louisiana.

AUGUST 1995, DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED

The grave site of James Campbell, a Laffite Lieutenant buried at Virginia Point near Galveston, will be visited in August. Following a short discussion of Campbell and a visit to the grave site, the Society will return to Galveston for lunch.

WELCOME NEW LAFFITIANS...

(THROUGH 31 DECEMBER 1994,

EXCLUSIVE OF FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS)

Dupae Library
The University of
Southwestern
Louisiana,
Lafayette, La.
Margaret Earthman
Galveston, Tx.
Jean Epperson
Dayton, Tx.
Eva Fritiofson
Galveston, Tx.
Lillie Petit Gallagher
St. Elizabeth
Foundation
Baton Rouge, La.
Kathleen Hink
Galveston County
Historical Museum
Galveston, Tx.
The Historic New
Orleans Collection
New Orleans, La.
Charles Kelley
Galveston, Tx.

Charles Kepner
Kensington, Ca.
Robert B. Looper
Golden Meadow, La.
Patrick Kuhns
Galveston, Tx.
Don Marler
Woodville, Tx.
Randal Matthews
Galveston, Tx..
Louise Nichols
Galveston, Tx.
Keith Poster
Galveston, Tx.
Chuck Terry
Galveston, Tx.
Robert C. Vogel
St. Paul, Mn.
Wallisville Heritage
Park Museum
Kevin Ladd
Wallisville, Tx.

THANK YOU FROM THE SOCIETY

Thanks to:

... Pat and Jean Landry of Grand Isle for their help in preparing for the Special Event to Grand Isle and New Orleans in May.

...Member Bob Looper of Golden Meadow, Louisiana, for his help in planning the same trip.

...Sally K. Reeves, Archivist, New Orleans Notarial Archives for her assistance to Jim Nonus, Diane and Dale Olson during their visit to the archives.

... Casey Greene, Anna Peebler, Judy Young and others on the Staff at the Rosenberg Library for their continuing assistance to members of the Society.

...Robert Schaadt, Director, Jonathan Gerland, Research Assistant, Penny Clark, Archivist and Curator, Darlene Mott, Librarian, and the Staff at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty, Texas for their help to our members in accomplishing research, and for hosting the Society for the Special Event in February.

... Members Randall Matthews, Chuck Terry, and Bill Foley for their contributions of food and wine for the December, 1994, General Meeting and Social.

CALENDAR

1995

January 9, Monday, 6:00 p.m.
Board of Directors Meeting

January 9, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

February 4, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.
Special Event. Visit to the Laffite
Collection at the Sam Houston
Regional Library, Liberty, Texas

February 13, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

March 13, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

April 10, Monday, 6:00 p.m.
Board of Directors Meeting

April 10, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

May 8, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

May 19-21, Friday, Saturday, Sunday
Special Event. Visit to Grand Isle,
Grande Terre, New Orleans.

June 12, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

July 10, Monday, 6:00 p.m.
Board of Directors Meeting

July 10, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

August 14, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

August (Tentative, Date to be announced)
Special Event, Visit to grave site of James
Campbell, Virginia Point, Texas

September 11, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

October 9, Monday, 6:00 p.m.
Board of Directors Meeting

October 9, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

November 13, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

December 11, Monday, 7:00 p.m.
General Meeting

All Board of Directors and General Meetings are held
in the McCullough Room at the Rosenberg Library,
Galveston, Texas, except for the December General
Meeting which is held at a location to be announced.